

"NEW DOMINION" AT THE AMERICAN.

By Alan Dale.

PERHAPS it is all due to natural confidence, but I find it hopelessly pleasant to have my work done for me. At the American Theatre last night there was not the least use of feeling important at having to pass the first metropolitan judgment upon new Clay Clement and the fresh "New Dominion." The whole thing was done on the programme. Clay Clement, remarked that sheet pinky, "in addition to a commanding figure and an expressive face, has added the graces and accomplishments of the great artist." His character creation had "been characterized by competent critics as one of the most original and unique characters given to the drama in recent years, and stands for a type, inasmuch as the American stage has seen nothing like it."

For years and years, the American stage has vegetated without Mr. Clay Clement and "The New Dominion," and the most remarkable thing is that it is still in existence. Oh, it is, and Mr. Clement's seething admirers cannot deny it. This stage has dragged itself wearily along without the incomparable character creation set forth in "The New Dominion." Managers have produced plays, and actors have tried to star. Now, however, it is all changed. We are as gods, knowing good and evil. We have seen Mr. Clay Clement, and are alive to tell the tale, even after "The New Dominion." And Clay, good Clay, has been thoroughly judged by competent critics. There is, therefore, very little for me to do but record a few straggling impressions—more whims of notions—and then go home and take a nap.

There is, however, a loophole, and I quote it. "To him," says Mr. Clement's librettist, "no wonder, then, the public looks with confidence for greater deeds, as standing upon the threshold of a grand career he strikes with all his might a blow to the drama in its best form, its noblest aspect." As long as there is this suggestion of just a possibility of something greater than what I saw last night, I feel better. The "competent critics" seem less aggressive, and Mr. Clay Clement, on the threshold of his grand career, comes down from his perch as human and New York-active.

In all seriousness, however, the young actor has not presented himself, as on the threshold of a grand career—he should have done. He has put forth a play which is so unutterably stupid, and so inconceivably dull that genius—genius that has crossed the threshold of a grand career—could do nothing with it. "The New Dominion" is positively hopeless. It is described as a character study, and a character study it might possibly be if there were any character in it. But there isn't—no, not a ghost of a character, not a symptom of anything that is higher than the common or garden puppet. As for the Baron Hohenstaufen, the type like unto which the American stage has seen nothing, well—if I were one of those competent critics before mentioned I should congratulate the American stage on its happy myopia, and beg it to continue never seeing anything like this type.

The Baron is a German with a thick and cuttable dialect—something like that used by the Rogers Brothers at Proctor's, but not nearly as good. He meanders aimlessly through "The New Dominion" and talks semi-humorously to the puppets therein without anything at all. He teaches a pretty girl the alphabet in German and insults the villain, who has a mortgage, or something of the sort, on her popper's estate. He appears in white trousers and a belt and is very much at ease. All his remarks are meant to tell, but they fail to do this, and the consequence was last night that the audience laughed because it felt it was supposed to laugh and wanted to be affable. The other people in "The New Dominion" all sported Southern dialects that were just a trifle less irritating than the German dialect of the Baron and the darky dialect of Uncle Poly. It was an indigestion of dialects. You got tangled up in it. You were lost in its labyrinth and stuck in its glue of incomprehensibility as a poor little fly is stuck on its death paper. "The New Dominion" reminded me more of "Dr. Claudius" than any other play I have seen, not precisely because it was so dissimilar, but because it was so utterly aimless. It began nowhere and ended nowhere else. At the close of the first act I defy any member of the audience to have clearly told the nucleus of a story, the baronial type, so popular with competent critics, struck me—this is merely a straggling impression, mind you—as being quite pointless, with more of the variety than the legitimate stage about it. A

character must surely mean something. It must set forth some trait, lovable or otherwise. But what on earth did this Baron characterize? He did nothing but catch his feet in his dialect, and juggle with the English language. German comedians do that even on the roof gardens, and competent critics never write terra-cotta pamphlets about them.

As I said before, however, Mr. Clement was foolish to himself. In the stupidity of the apt he oversteps himself; it was quite easy—without professing to be a competent critic—to see that he is a young person of intelligence. I feel quite sure—humbly, of course—that there is very good material in Mr. Clement, and that in a small "character bit" in some comedy he would shine quite agreeably. He is a stout person, with plenty of half-nice glossy, advertisement hair—but he is conscientious, and on the threshold of his grand career—I advise him to give up the privilege of seeing him in some comic play. The competent critics may be satisfied with "The New Dominion," but Mr. Clement will do better with something that would tickle the fancies of the incompetent. This actor shows an anxiety to act; you feel that he could entertain you, and do himself justice. But he has selected a role so pitifully uninteresting that Mansfield himself would shiver at its impossibility. If Mr. Clement wants my opinion (I decline to call it competent, in view of the dreadful people who shoulder that adjective), I should say that he is a good actor, clamoring for opportunities.

In his company he has no very luminous associates. I rather liked Miss Karna Kenwyn, who seemed to me to be an actress—perhaps that was because she was in juxtaposition with those who didn't seem like that, and couldn't seem like that. Miss Kenwyn delivered one of two of her speeches so nicely that I feel convinced she could please even this incompetent city. Carleton Macy played his part rather intelligently, and Miss Rolinda Bainbridge tried hard to live up to her programme reputation of "a Virginia Flower." It must be a dreadful thing to be cast for a flower part—so hopeless trying to be fragrant, and beautiful and guileless. I always pity Virginia flowers, and that sort of thing.

The other members of the company must have been selected by the competent critics who found the part of the Baron something absolutely unique and delectable. It is not worth while making them answer the roll call. Let Mr. Clement, at the threshold of his grand career, cut loose from "The New Dominion." It will be a milestone around his neck. He has a strong neck, a fleshy neck, a characteristic neck, but it can never stand this play.

Marie Dressler's Artistic Hit.

If you haven't seen Marie Dressler in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" at the Pleasure Palace, please don't consider yourself technically up to date. The popular, charming and exceedingly versatile young actress has made the artistic hit of her career in the tumultuous travesty on "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," and it's quite the proper thing to see her, for her capital acting is the topic of conversation in many quarters. She has made quite as great a success as a burlesque actress as Minnie Maddern Fiske has made as an emotional one. And that's saying a great deal. Here is a buxom, bolsterous Tess, a most hilarious and diverting person. She certainly handles the role with remarkable judgment and skill. At one moment she strikes a tragic note with such certainty that the audience is silenced as if a Duse or a Bernhardt were commanding its attention. The very next instant she performs some absurd antic, moving, as it were, from the sublime to the ridiculous, and shrieks of merriment follow.

In addition to Miss Dressler, Frank Bush and his entire company appear at the Palace in the three-act vaudeville comedy, "A Girl Wanted," which permits the comedian to introduce his inimitable songs, stories and imitations. He impersonates a song and dance man, a Vermont Yankee, a German servant girl, a tough Bowery waiter and several types of the Hebrew that have made him justly popular.

Anton Seidl yesterday concluded arrangements with Mrs. Cosima Wagner whereby he will conduct the performances of "Parsifal" at the Wagner festival in Bayreuth during July and August. The rehearsals of the opera have been so arranged that they will not conflict with Herr Seidl's Covent Garden engagement.

"Das Rheingold," Fire and Water.

By John W. Keller.

Measured by the Bayreuth standard, the performance of "Das Rheingold" at the Metropolitan Opera House last night was slightly insufficient. Fortunately for the music lovers who filled that spacious edifice, they were not familiar with the Bayreuth standard. Their standard, and the one made by the New York standard, and the result was satisfactory, mainly because Wagner in any form is not wholly unsatisfactory. The attractive thing about Wagner is the inadequacy of the earth for the exploitation of his genius. The depths of the sea, the bowels of mountains, a little heaven and a lot of hell are necessary for his talents to take the most riveting turn. Some old-fashioned people long for melody, and insist on the prima donna taking the middle of the stage and singing like a nightingale. But they are behind the times. New York now wants this sort of thing.

Weil! Waga!
Waga, du Weil!
Weil! wir Waga!
Wagala! Waga!
Waila waila wail!

And when it gets it, it raves. Wagner is a mighty river of orchestral music, and the people on the stage are only bits of driftwood to indicate the swiftness of the current, the swirling of the eddies, the unevenness of the rapids. It is a pity that some of the driftwood of last night did not encounter a cataract. Niagara Falls would not have been in commensurate with their offences. But that is another story.

What I am trying to get at now is that in order to enjoy Wagner thoroughly one must have faith. It is impossible to assume the attitude of Dr. Lyman Abbott toward that little affair of Jonah and the whale and take any comfort in a Wagnerian performance. When those three charming mermaids, the Misses Woglinde, Wellgunda and Flosshilde, play tag with the amorous Alberic on the bottom of the Rhine and sing a merry ha-ha all the while under water, we must accept them as real mermaids and the noise they make as real singing. The temptation to think about the quantum lobster, Mr. Fitzsimmons, in his giant tank, must be put aside sternly. Suggested comparisons are as much out of place in connection with Wagner as physiological facts. When one goes in for the supernatural he must let his imagination fly full swing and ask no questions. Wagner mixes fire and water in "Das Rheingold" and gets steam and music. I don't mean in the "calliope" sense, but really. Thus his productions natural result and works miracles simultaneously. That is the reason that we of his school worship him so wildly.

All undoubtedly some of the dilettanti will take issue with Mr. Walter Damrosch for having done "Das Rheingold" at all last night. They will most likely advise him from further pursuit of his scheme to present the rest of the Nibelungen Tetralogy this week. Their ground is that it took a year for the preparation of the Bayreuth performance of "Das Rheingold," and attempt to do it under existing conditions was sacrilege. I hope that Mr. Damrosch will pay no attention to this dilatory. For one, at least, I thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment last night. Its aquatic, nautical, submersible, menageriel and subterranean effects were splendid. The orchestra must be taken on Wagnerian faith. Mr. Damrosch will present "Die Walkure" to-morrow night, and I have no doubt that the Opera House will be filled with an audience quite as large and as enthusiastic as that of last night.

Of the driftwood already referred to in mass, it is but just to mention particularly Herr Fritz Ernst for his excellent work as Loge, both vocally and dramatically. Emil Fischer was impressive as Wotan and Marie Martens as the Frae, Wilhelm Martens the Alberic and Gerhard Stemann, Donner. The others must be taken on Wagnerian faith. Mr. Damrosch will present "Die Walkure" to-morrow night, and I have no doubt that the Opera House will be filled with an audience quite as large and as enthusiastic as that of last night.

Here and There at Other Theatres.

One of the strongest plays ever offered at the Grand Opera House was presented at that theatre last night. It was Sardou's successful Napoleonic comedy, "Madame Sans Gêne." Of course the house was tested to its utmost capacity, for West Siders are not slow in recognizing an extraordinary attraction. The piece was presented on the same elaborate scale that marked its original American production at the Broadway Theatre a few seasons ago. Kathryn Klidder gave her familiar clever impersonation of the haughty Duchess, and James Cooper, who replaced Augustus Cook as Napoleon, gave a thoroughly satisfactory interpretation of the role.

The name of Maggie Cline was sufficient to draw a crowded house to the Columbus last night. The "Irish Queen" is a big favorite with Harlemites, and they didn't care particularly what play she appeared in. "On Broadway" is simply a vehicle for the introduction of bright specialties and Maggie Cline. Miss Cline continued to "throw" down her old enemy, McCluskey, in her usual buoyant, pugilistic manner.

"At Pine Ridge," David K. Higgins' pretty romantic play of Southern life, moved down to the Academy for a brief stay. This piece is not of the conventional melodramatic order; its characters are original, realistically drawn, and no specialist of the familiar stage type. The play tells a simple, probable story in a straightforward manner, and deserved every bit of the success it achieved during its run at the Academy. The cast is an exceptionally well balanced one.

Chauncey Olcott continues to do a phenomenal business at the Fourteenth Street Theatre, and as yet there is no evidence of the waning popularity of Augustus Pitou's picturesque play, "Sweet Innis-carra." The playhouse is completely filled at every performance, and latecomers are unable to secure even standing room. Mr. Olcott's songs are still a strong feature of the performance, and there is every probability that the popular Irish comedian will remain where he is until May.

Commendable new business, catchy songs and entertaining specialties were last night infused into George V. Hobart's amusing burlesque and topical review, "Miss Manhattan," which is in its second week at Wallack's. Among the new specialties are two organ grinders who give a very unique act, and a chorus of newboys. The latter were enthusiastically received. The realistic scene of "Dead Man's Curve," which was withdrawn a few nights ago, has been restored to its original place in the second act. The French bell scene and the dance of William Cameron and Georgia Hawley have made distinct hits.

Oiga Netherless is attracting large audiences to the Garden Theatre by her vivid, indeed, almost too vivid, portrayal of Carmen.

May Irvin is doing a land office business in "Conjunctio Court" at the Bijou. She is still singing her famous negro melody, "The New Bull."

Though it has scored a distinct artistic success, "L'Arlesienne" has not reaped the rich harvest of coin its wealthy promoters anticipated, and the piece will be withdrawn from the Broadway Theatre Saturday night.

There's much to commend in Oscar Hammerstein's burlesque, "In Great New York." In its present altered shape. All the irrelevant and dull matter has been eliminated, and it now affords a good evening's entertainment. In the cast are a number of well-known players, and they keep the ball of humor rolling from start to finish.

Hi Henry's minstrels held the boards of the Star Theatre last night. In the company are some favorably known black-faced comedians and they give the nearest approach to the good old-time minstrel entertainment seen in this city in many days.

The pruning knife has been used to great advantage in "Gayest Manhattan" at Koster and Bial's, and the burlesque is now running along very smoothly. The most entertaining number in the olio which precedes the piece is Professor Leonidas and his remarkable trained dogs and cats.

Edw. Harrigan Among His Types

By James L. Ford.

Edward Harrigan returned last night to the East Side that he has done so much to immortalize, and played "Old Lavender" in the presence of an audience that only partly filled the People's Theatre and might have been made up of the sons and daughters of those who loved to applaud the "Mulligan Guards" in lower Broadway a score of years ago.

His engagement this week is perhaps the last that he will ever fill in New York, and, by a strange turn of the wheel of fate, he is playing on the very spot—the site of Tony Pastor's old theatre—where he and Tony Hart first appeared together in the early seventies.

The piece in which he enacted the chief role last night was originally a twenty-minute sketch, written to suit the peculiar talents of Hart and himself at that period of their careers, when, happily for them and the public, they had not discovered that they were "artistic," nor been "discovered" themselves by anybody save that advance guard of critical taste that has its headquarters in the Newsboys' Lodging House.

I am not capable of commenting on last night's representation from the fair and reasonable standpoint of one seeing it for the first time, because to me it was simply a sad reminder of by-gone days. When I saw "Dick the Rat" I thought of Tony Hart, the very best exponent of roles of that type that the present generation has known, and when "Smoke" appeared on the dock with his pocket full of cigar stumps, I remembered the delicious fun with which Johnny Wild, clad in the historic linen duster which was one of the most treasured properties of the wardrobe room, used to invest the part. Mrs. Yeamans was also sadly missed by the old-timers present, and, indeed, there were but two names on the programme, besides that of Harrigan, that were reminders of the olden times on lower Broadway. These were Harry Fisher and George Merritt, and neither showed to great advantage last night.

The original Harrigan entertainments owed their immense popularity not to the efforts of one man alone, but to the harmonious work of a company that was carefully selected and well cast, one in which the smallest "bit" received the same attention that was bestowed upon the most important roles.

Played by an ordinary company of actors and stripped of all the accessories in the way of scenery, costumes and lights that added so much to its effectiveness "Old Lavender" is not a piece calculated to satisfy a New York audience of the present extreme. If you have seen him as the Artful Dodger in "Oliver Twist" you will not, perhaps, be surprised to learn that as the noble English cad of "The Wrong Mr. Wright"—Lord Brazenface—he fairly challenges the star for the honors of the performance.

Sheridan Tupper and Mrs. Mary Myers are well fitted with character parts—Wayland Clingstone, "who was one of the boys long ago," and Arabella, his unwedded but willing-to-be sister. Charles S. Abbe, Holbrook Blinn, Julian Reed and Miss May Monte Donico keep their scenes moving at the speed set by the star.

In the person of Miss Alethea Luce Mr. Reed has added to his company a new and engaging personality—new, at least, hereabouts, and engaging by all standards. She has a strange combination and a charming comedy voice. In the piece she is a maid masquerading as her young and wealthy mistress, for the purpose of drawing the fire of the irrepressible English nobleman.

For the latter's education she did a naughty skirt dance that brought down the house.

There are a few ridiculous spots in "The Wrong Mr. Wright," notably that where a young captain in the army makes chivalrous love to a lady's maid, and enunciates high naval sentiments on the subject to all comers. The audience's knowledge that the maid is in reality the mistress doesn't make the captain appear any less a booby. But

Barrymore in Vaudeville.

By Curtis Dunham.

IT is not often that the laughter-loving Harlemites turn out for an evening with the confidence that sent them to the Harlem Opera House last night. There are other things in a theatrical way that are quite as funny as Roland Reed—if you only knew it; but in the case of this personal comedian you know it—nothing is left to chance; whatever the play may be, your evening of laughter is assured.

"The Wrong Mr. Wright" is the promising title of the piece which Mr. Reed at present pervades. It is not much of a piece—which is eminently proper. It would be a great pity to see the numerous and long since proved and attested advantages of this staple entertainer overshadowed by the merits of the comedy in which he appears. If George H. Bradhurst, author of "The Wrong Mr. Wright," was guilty of such a mistake, the remedy was applied before the show struck Harlem. As the play now stands, it contains nothing which can for a moment distract the auditor's attention from its principal actor—not even the snap and go of its witty lines, since Mr. Reed himself monopolizes them.

"The Wrong Mr. Wright" presents Mr. Reed in the character of Seymour Sites, a California millionaire, who has arrived at Old Point Comfort in hot pursuit of his cashier, who has absconded with \$50,000—after years of faithful service, during which his employer has advanced his salary from "seven fifty to twelve dollars a week." The millionaire, priding himself on his ability as a detective, assumes the name of Wright—which is the name the absconder has also assumed, though this latter circumstance is known only to the woman detective who arrives simultaneously at the same hotel in search of the criminal and the \$50,000 reward. As a matter of course, the detective immediately pounces on the millionaire as the Mr. Wright she is after—and that is the story.

Mr. Reed and his company—so their manager says, and to which statement last night's audience of Harlemites will make no protest—have found their Western audiences during the present season quite as willing to be amused at "The Wrong Mr. Wright" as with "Th Politician," which commanded their attention for so long. Miss Isadore Rush was handsome and flashing as the female detective, and was made love to after the side splitting fashion characteristic of the chief comedians of the place. For a lady who cannot sing, and doubtless knows it, Miss Rush probably made the greatest hit with a piquant lullaby ever achieved under like conditions. You would have had no difficulty in figuring this out to be because she let you know what the scene was about, and—smiled. Miss Rush's smile leaves whatever shortcomings she is troubled with clear out of the running.

Charles Coote is provided with what in stage parlance is known as a "fat" part. It would not be "fat" for every actor, but for Charles Coote it is elegant in the extreme. If you have seen him as the Artful Dodger in "Oliver Twist" you will not, perhaps, be surprised to learn that as the noble English cad of "The Wrong Mr. Wright"—Lord Brazenface—he fairly challenges the star for the honors of the performance.

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Barrymore in Vaudeville.

Maurice Barrymore, sandwiched in between the Aeolian Trio and the Russell Brothers, sacrifices none of his numerous and familiar inducements thereby. His debut in continuous performances at Keith's yesterday was made with ecstacy. And this was in spite of a crying baby in a balcony box and a violin back of the scenes somewhere, which tried to play "Annie Laurie," but which had manifestly missed its vocation.

Barry's continuous performance debut presented him in perhaps his most artistic and effective character—that of Captain Bradley, in Augustus Thomas's one-act inspiration, "A Man of the World." There was almost no applause for Barry when he started last night. This omission may have been due to the aforesaid crying baby and the mistaken violin. But it was good to see the way those hardened continuous performers warmed up to him. The house was simply packed—packed with people who do not patronize Keith's for thinking purposes. But Barry made them glad to think they followed the familiar and splendidly human story with breathless interest, except when Barry made one of the few subtle comedy points of the piece, when they laughed as one man, and instantly were all attention again.

It was evident that some of the more hardened continuous performers were receiving their original introduction to a new and previously undrugged manifestation of dramatic art. They were, of course, mouthed, to begin with, and a trifle dazed, but to end with they were undeniably enthralled. Barry's performance was a fact that the Russell Brothers—the continuous performers' delight—were yet to appear, and kept up their applause until the curtain had lit and the times to enable the newcomer in their graces to bow his pleased acknowledgments, and Barry was a most successful debut. It went hurt Barry, and it is a pleasant shock to the new constituency.

MINER-M'INTOSH DISPUTE.

The Theatrical Congressman Takes Exceptions to Some Statements Made by the Actor.

Henry C. Miner, Congressman and theatrical manager, takes exception to some of the statements made by Burr McIntosh, the actor, in commenting on his suit for \$25,000 brought against the manager for damages growing out of an alleged broken contract.

"The truth of this matter," said Mr. Miner last night, "is that Mr. Brooks, Mr. McVicker, of Chicago, and myself formed a syndicate. One night Mr. Brooks brought in a new actor, Mr. McIntosh, and I signed him. I signed it, too. The contract was to bring Mr. McIntosh out the same as we were bringing out the Holland and others. I was not to manage Mr. McIntosh, but simply to put my money into the syndicate for my share of the stock."

"Soon after that Mr. Brooks was taken sick and forced to abandon his business and Mr. McVicker died. I saw that the work of the syndicate was falling on me and decided to sell my stock. Later Mr. Brooks said he had decided to put Mr. McIntosh on the road, and Mr. McVicker said he would not consent to a contract for \$400. I sent a check for that amount to Mr. McIntosh at the Lamb's Club and was surprised to have it returned with a statement that Mr. McIntosh had changed his mind."

"After that I had an interview with the actor, the first I had ever had. He said he felt he ought to be put on the road. I said that was impossible, as the syndicate was disposing of everything. Besides, he had no play. It was then he proposed 'Pine Ridge.' I read the play, and said it was too long—two of the acts should be put into one. I told him I had a contract with W. A. Brady by which the latter would bring out the play, which we proposed to stage at the Holland. Mr. McIntosh would not consent to Brady as a manager, though he is under his management to-day. He also wanted the leading actors and actresses to support him, but he would listen to none of my proposals."

"His statement that I had said that even if he got a judgment my income would enable me to keep him out of the money for six years is false. I am not in the business of defeating the ends of justice or showing any contempt of court."

Prominent Hartford Man Dead.

Hartford, March 29.—George A. Bolles, a prominent clubman, died this morning of pneumonia, aged forty-four years. He was treasurer of the Hartford Club and a member of the Manhattan Club of New York. His father was the late millionaire William Bolles, of this city. Mr. Bolles was a close friend of the late Commodore Cort. He leaves a wife, who was Miss Reid, of New York, and two children.